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NEWS AT RANDOM

Federal

Switzerland concerned with the problem of re-establishing its finances on a normal basis, after the uncertainties of the war years, had the agreeable surprise of finding that the federal "housekeeping" for 1946 left it far better off than had been expected.

Instead of the expected deficit of 425,000,000 francs the deficit was found to be only 2,700,000 francs. Half a century ago, the Confederation would have been concerned about this figure, but to-day, when cities and countries think in terms of hundreds of millions, the budget may be regarded as virtually balanced, especially as it included an allocation of 100,000,000 francs to cover future risks.

The great difference between estimated and actual deficit in the 1946 federal accounts is due to a combination of unusual circumstances, which add up to increased income and diminished spending. The estimates for the budget year were made while the world war was still on, and expenditure was expected to be much higher on items such as military preparedness. Also, many state projects were held up because of shortage of labour, or lack of delivery of raw materials, and higher costs. Even the resumption of relations with the outside world and the exceptional expenditure this entailed do not alter the over-all picture.

Switzerland contributed 150,000,000 francs, in settlement of the claims for German assets as agreed in the Washington Agreement, 115,000,000 francs for the relief of war distress, 75,000,000 francs for relief work among Swiss citizens abroad, etc. The Department of Finance has also had to pay out subsidies for keeping the cost of living stable. This amounted to 129,000,000 francs to the milk and dairy industries, for potatoes, cereals, etc.

On the income side, the special tax, "Sacrifice for National Defense" brought in 401,000,000 francs. This will be much less during the current year. Receipts from purchase tax and from customs duties also realized a large sum because of increased industrial activity during the first post-war year, and

the desire of the Swiss to buy imported goods they had not seen since 1939.

The Federal finance authorities continue to stress the need for stringent economies in every branch of public life. No abatement of taxes can be expected in 1947 and general prosperity must depend upon increased supplies of raw materials from outside and the opening of world markets.

* * *

The average level of wages and salaries in Switzerland during the first quarter of this year increased by a further 2.5 per cent., according to the statistics of the Federal Office of Industry.

In comparison with the immediate pre-war situation (January-August 1939) the index figure for wages per hour stood at 170.3 by the end of March this year. The cost of living index, on the other hand, reached 115.3. This means that the real income of salary earners was 9.7 per cent. higher than before the war.

These figures are based on statistical averages obtained from the data supplied by 3,200 firms employing 231,000 workers.

* * *

The Federal Chambers started their summer session on Monday, June 2nd in Berne.

The Federal Council has asked Parliament to vote credits for establishing Legations in India and Burma. The motion points out that Switzerland entertains important commercial relations with both countries which fully justify a diplomatic representation.

It is proposed to appoint Ministers for these two Legations and that the diplomatic representative for India should be, at the same time, accredited to the Siamese (Thai) Government at Bangkok.

The General Consulate and the Consulate at Bombay and Calcutta respectively will continue to function. [A.T.S.]

Nouvelle Société Helvétique

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OPEN MEETING

Tuesday, 17th June, 1947, at 7 p.m.,

at the Vienna Café,

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Subjects for discussion :

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Cantonal

The heirs of the late R. Hagnauer-Vogel in Zurich have presented to the canton of Schwyz the painting "Der Tod Winkelried's" by the Swiss painter, Georg Ludwig Vogel (1788-1879). The painter Vogel enjoyed the reputation of a painter on war subjects. [A.T.S.]

One hundred and eighty persons belonging to the City Livery Club of London, have spent a fortnight's holiday in Lucerne.

They were received by the Mayor of Lucerne, Dr. Max Wey, who welcomed them. The President of the City Livery Club, in expressing the thanks of its members, conveyed to the Mayor of Lucerne the personal greetings of the Lord Mayor of London. [A.T.S.]

The Municipal Band (Stadtmusik) of Lucerne has celebrated their 125th jubilee on which occasion they gave a special performance, starting with the "Zapfenstreich." The Mayor of Lucerne tendered his congratulations in person. [A.T.S.]

Professor E. Gäumann of the Federal Technical University in Zurich has been made a member of the Swedish and Norwegian Academies of Science.

The famous lute-player, Hanns In der Gand, has died in Zumikon (Zurich) at the age of 65.

The deceased studied at one time philology at the University of Neuchâtel, but later on visited various

academies of music and became a concert singer, specialising in the folk lore of various nations; as such he toured the United States, France, Germany and Italy. During the Frontier occupation 1914/18 he sang to many thousands of Swiss soldiers and many of our readers will, no doubt, remember his famous song "Gilberte de Courgenay." [A.T.S.]

During the year 1946, the town of Zurich spent an amount of Frs.4,668,000.— on keeping the town clean. [A.T.S.]

The 19th International Congress of the P.E.N. Club was opened on the 3rd of this month in Zurich. Professor Robert Faesi, President of the Zurich P.E.N. Club gave the opening address, he was followed by Dr. Ph. Etter, President of the Swiss Confederation, and Herman Ould, international secretary of the organisation.

Thirty-five countries with 400 delegates are taking place in the deliberations, amongst the latter are Thomas Mann (U.S.A.), Stijn Streuvels (Belgium), Vercors (France) Silone (Italy) etc.

An official reception given by the municipal and cantonal authorities was held at the Congress Hall in honour of the delegates. [A.T.S.]

The elections for the cantonal parliament of Glarus show the following strength of the parties: Liberals 25 (27); Democrats 21 (19); Socialists 13 (13); Cath. Cons. 7 (9); and 2 Christian Socialists (0).

Dr. Markus Feldmann has been elected President of the Grand Council of the canton of Berne. The new head of the cantonal parliament has played an important part in the Swiss Press, having been editor-in-chief of the "Neuen Berner Zeitung" from 1928-1945. Dr. Feldmann was at one time President of the Press Association in Berne, and Central President of the Swiss Press Association. [A.T.S.]

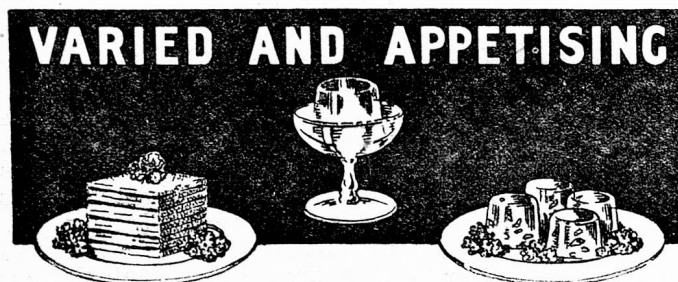
Karl Bornhauser, for many years head cashier of the Swiss National Bank, has died in Berne at the age of 74. All Swiss bank notes in circulation bear his signatures. [A.T.S.]

Two young mountaineers Fuchs and Mathey, from Bienne, who were on a mountain climbing excursion on the Raimeux near Moutier, fell several feet and received serious injuries, they were removed to the hospital at Moutier.

Peter Tièche (19) a pupil at the Technical School at Bienne, lost his life when climbing in the Adalboden district. [A.T.S.]

Dr. h.c. Carl Moser, President of the Board of the "Zuckerfabrik Aarberg," has celebrated his 80th birthday anniversary. Dr. Moser was a member of the Government of the canton of Berne from 1908-1931. From 1917-19 he sat in the National Council and from 1919-1935 he held a seat in the States Council.

The "Conseil d'Etat" of the canton of Fribourg has nominated René de Landerset, from Villars-sur-Glâne, to the post of "Kantonschemiker" in succession to the late M. Bardel. [A.T.S.]



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Dean Viktor Schwaller has been nominated honorary canon of the St. Niklaus cathedral in Fribourg. [A.T.S.]

* * *

The death is reported from Basle of National-Councillor Ernst Stiefel, Administrator of the "Verbandes nordostschweizerischer Käserei- und Milchgenossenschaften, Winterthur" at the age of 60. In the army he held the rank of colonel. [A.T.S.]

* * *

The elections for the renewal of the parliament of the canton Basle-County (Landrat) took place recently. The following parties are represented in the new council: Liberals 19 (17); Socialists 24 (22); Democrats 12 (16); Peasant 9 (10); cath. popular party 9 (9); communists 7 (6). [A.T.S.]

* * *

After twenty-eight years service, a custom's official at the Federal Custom's Office in Basle was dismissed; he was caught opening parcels containing watches and helping himself to some of them. Proceedings will be taken against him. [A.T.S.]

* * *

The electricity works and tramway company at St. Gall have celebrated their 50th anniversary. [A.T.S.]

* * *

Dr. Eduard Scherrer, a former member of the government of St. Gall, and for many years "Stadtammann" of the town of St. Gall, has celebrated his 85th birthday anniversary. He played for many years an important part in the political sphere of the canton of St. Gall and for some time sat in Parliament (National Council). [A.T.S.]

* * *

The couple Theodor and Therese Gresch-Guggenbühl in Wagen (St. Gall) have celebrated their diamond wedding anniversary (60 years). The husband is 83 and the wife 81 years old. [A.T.S.]

* * *

The Swiss Peasant Association (Schweiz. Bauernverband) has celebrated its 50th jubilee at Brugg.

A service was held at the "Stadtkirche" in Brugg which was attended by a large number of eminent people, amongst them Federal-President Etter, Federal Councillors Stampfli and v. Steiger, late Federal

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Councillors Minger and Pilet-Golaz, the speakers of the National and States Councils, Dr. Wey and Dr. Ackermann respectively, etc., etc.

Amongst the speakers at the service and at the banquet which followed were: Dr. F. Porchet, President of the Association, Professor Dr. Howald, Federal Councillor Stampfli, Professor Creasemann, National Councillor Dr. P. Gysler, Professor Laur and Director E. Tobler. [A.T.S.]

* * *

An unusual case of suicide took place at the airfield of Magadino (Ticino). A man living in Winterthur, boarded a plane for a circuit flight, when the machine reached the vicinity of Bellinzona he opened the cabin door, and threw himself out, his body was later found in a meadow near Carasso. [A.T.S.]

* * *

According to a report issued by the Police Department of the canton of Ticino in Bellinzona, altogether 120 Fascists and Nazis have been expelled from its territory during 1946, and fifty permits of residence have been cancelled. [A.T.S.]

* * *

Edouard Muller, Chairman of the Board of the Nestlé concern has been made an honorary citizen of the town of Vevey.

M. Muller was born in 1885 at Tour de Peilz, and originated from Ober & Untersiggenthal (Aargau), he

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was educated at the Collège de Vevey and after an apprenticeship with the Crédit du Léman entered the Nestlé Company in 1903. For several years he was in the service of the Company abroad, where he gained the reputation of a shrewd business man. In 1937, on the death of L. Dapples, he was appointed Chairman of the Board of Nestlé's a position to which he was eminently fitted. It might be recorded, that during the first world war 1914-18, M. Muller was permanent Delegate of the International Red Cross Committee at Athens. The University of Lausanne honoured him with the degree of *doctor honoris causa*.

The *Première* of the tragedy "Lampe d'argile" by the Vaudois dramatist René Morax took place early this month at the Théâtre du Jorat in Mézières (Vaud).

Amongst the audience were Federal-Councillors Petitpierre, Celio, Stampfli and Kobelt, and General Guisan. The play received an enthusiastic reception.

[A.T.S.]

The death has occurred at Lausanne of Dr. Tecoz at the age of 65. The deceased practised at Leysin and Lausanne. He was the editor of the official organ of Swiss medical practitioners.

Gaston Favarel, the well-known Swiss painter and costume designer has died at Mézières (Vaud) at the age of 46. He was a pupil of Jean Morax and René Auberjonois.

In 1925, he was the recipient of the Federal Arts prize. Many of his works are to be found both in Protestant and Catholic churches throughout our country.

Lucien Lathion from Nendaz, has been elected President of the Grand Council of the canton of Valais. Lathion holds the post of station-master at Siders and in his spare time has written various books on history and literature, he is also a regular correspondent of various Swiss papers.

Emer Du Pasquier, commercial-manager of the electric cable works in Cortaillod (Neuchâtel) has died at the age of 41. He was well-known in theatrical and sport circles.

Louys Châtelin, architect and painter in water colours, has died in Neuchâtel at the age of 71. The deceased was for many years drawing master at the local school.

Army

The Federal Council has announced that colonel Labhart, commander of the 4th army-corps, has asked to be relieved of his command, his resignation has been accepted and thanks for the services he has rendered have been expressed.

Colonel Iselin, commander of the 4th division has been appointed as his successor.

Colonel Hans Thomman from Münchwilen, hitherto chief of staff of the 2nd army-corps has been promoted to the command of the 4th division.

Switzerland is to maintain a peace-time air force of at least 500 aircraft of the latest type. An order for 75 De Havilland Vampire jet aircraft at a cost of £3,088,235 has been placed in Britain. This order is only a first step in the formation of this force.

Flight-lieutenant Jeanpierre Bucche, crashed with a Messerschmitt machine near Bémont-Montfaucon, he was killed instantaneously and the machine was wrecked. Lieutenant Bucche, born in 1915, was an architect by profession and lived at St. Imier.

A military motor-cyclist collided with an engine of the Brünig railway at a level crossing outside Meiringen. Both the driver and passenger were killed.

[A.T.S.]

Traffic

Twenty-five years ago, on June 1st, 1922, the first air service from Switzerland was inaugurated. The then "Ad Astra" Company started a regular Geneva-Zurich-Nürnberg service, using Junkers F.13 all metal passenger planes accommodating a pay-load of five passengers.

An important step towards the building of the projected tunnel for road traffic under Mont Blanc, which would reduce the journey between Paris and Rome, by many hours, was made at a meeting of French, Swiss and Italian bankers, financiers, engineers and politicians. Speakers said that funds would be forthcoming for the project, which would greatly assist French and Swiss tourism.

Humanitarian

A special train carrying 450 children from Hungary has arrived at Buchs. The Swiss Red Cross, is taking charge of them, distributing the children amongst families; they will stay in our country for three months.

The committee "Help for Poland's children" has sent a third consignment of goods to Poland, consisting of 900 kg. boots, 2,000 kg. children's garments, 1,500 kg. soap tablets, blankets, underclothing, food and toys to the value of 38,000.—Frs. A fourth consignment is in preparation.

Four hundred children from the South of France have arrived at Geneva at the invitation of the Swiss Red Cross. They will remain for three months in Switzerland, and will be placed with Swiss families.

Another arrival of 640 children from the town of Vienna is reported from Buchs.

General Lee, commander-in-chief of the American troops in Italy has visited several towns in Switzerland, in order to thank the authorities who were concerned in arranging holidays for American soldiers in Switzerland.

The trial began at Zug of 36 Swiss Nazis, members of the "League of Swiss citizens in Greater Germany" accused for treason and espionage for Germany during the war.

It is the first trial of Swiss, formerly domiciled in Germany, charged with plotting the security of our country. They are all accused of planning to create a Nazi force in Switzerland and ready to overthrow the Government when Hitler invaded the country.

Some of the accused are in the custody of the Allies in occupied Germany.